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Working paper concerning CD action on an APL transfer ban

The Conference on Disarmament has a clear mandate to address conventional disarmament issues. As part of this mandate, we believe the CD has a role to play in strengthening the existing international regime against anti-personnel landmines. This would involve the negotiation of a ban on the transfer of APLs, as a complement to existing international agreements on APLs. There is an expectation that the CD will undertake this work, as evidenced by the strong support accorded to UN General Assembly Resolution 52/38H, which invites the CD to intensify its efforts on APLs.

It is with great pleasure that we note the entry into force of Amended Protocol II of the Convention on Certain Conventional Weapons (the CCW), and the imminent entry into force of the Ottawa Convention. These instruments represent major achievements. However, many major historical users, producers and exporters of APL's, who are also members of the CD, are not for the moment in a position to accede to the Ottawa Convention or the CCW. An APL transfer ban negotiated by the entire CD membership would therefore bring these countries at least some of the way towards the goal of a total APL ban, and in due course encourage increased participation in the existing international instruments. It would moreover play an important role in stemming the supply of APL's by significantly reducing the availability of these weapons which continue to have tragic humanitarian consequences in many regions of the world. The task of implementing a global regime against land-mines would be enhanced if we pursued a transfers ban within the CD.

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We believe negotiating a transfer ban in the CD would have a number of compelling advantages. It would, from the beginning cover all types of anti-personnel land-mines. Such negotiations would also involve, from the outset, the relevant States not yet party to the Ottawa Convention or the CCW. These negotiations would, we believe, represent another irreversible step forward in the universalisation of the global fight against land-mines. A further advantage of the CD negotiating a transfer ban is that it has the capacity to get down to work on this issue immediately and achieve an expeditious completion of the negotiations. According to the proposals currently before the Conference a consensus exists in favour of the re-appointment of a CD Special Coordinator on APL's. On this basis the CD should move quickly to capitalize on the consensus and re-appoint a Special Coordinator to carry forward the work on this important issue, with a view to the early establishment of an Ad Hoc Committee, given the broad support demonstrated within the CD for that course of action.